



BEEs

The LifeWatch ERIC Biodiversity & Ecosystem eScience Conference

Seville
22-24/05/23



Threats and challenges to biodiversity and ecosystem conservation from an eScience perspective



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In 2019 the Internal Joint Initiative was launched to build the next generation of Virtual Research Environments to help researchers take their investigations to the next level.

The challenge for the Communication Office was how to connect with a greater number of audiences, not always scientists.



Communication Strategy Objectives

- Raise the profile of LifeWatch ERIC
- Give visibility to national scientific communities
- Attract new users and further involve scientists
- Engage with decision-makers, EU institutions and environmental managers
- Inform citizens, the private sector, and the media of impacts on ordinary people's lives.

Strategic coordination

A strategic plan, together with the specialised competences in this field available in the Service Centre, ensures an effective approach to IJ communication activities tailored to the different phases of the initiative, and to the coordination of dissemination efforts within the communicators group and the research groups involved.

Defined targets for specific actions

It is impossible to reach everyone, and therefore this strategy moves from the identification of key target groups and subgroups, to delivering adapted messages through tailored actions and the right media mix.

The issue is the message

At the heart of the IJ we find one of the hot topics in the biodiversity and ecosystem research domain, NIS. Therefore, this strategy focuses not only on the outcomes of the IJ, but also on the issues and collaborative processes leading to results, building engaging narratives through the use of a storytelling approach.

Make it relevant to everyday life

Thanks to the narrative framework, it will be possible to put the focus on the impact of NIS for institutions, citizens and private sector actors, showing how the work of LifeWatch ERIC enables knowledge-based solutions to environmental problems.

Think global, act local

Moving from the overall narrative and validation cases, and thanks to our national nodes and communicators group, it will be possible to identify specific areas particularly affected by the different issues tackled, which would particularly benefit the new services on offer. The different emerging stories will then be put together for the promotion of the IJ itself, which will ultimately be presented as a unified narrative and product in the global context.

We decided on a story-telling approach, in multimedia formats. Telling stories is one of the distinctive skills of *Homo sapiens* and has been used in various forms to make sense of the outside world, events, and reinforce community belonging for millennia.



Our first new communicative venture was the “Alien Alert!” magazine: the stories of the five validation cases that informed the co-creation of the LifeWatch VRE

User-friendly composability layers, LifeBlock, metadata harmonisation, ontologies: stuff that’s quite challenging to explain!



An example of story-telling:

Saying the Atlantic Blue Crab likes its food is an understatement. They are voracious omnivores and highly aggressive. They mutilate fish caught in traps, destroy nets and prey on clams, mussels and oysters... Information on their distribution is plentiful because they are so easily identified, but there is scarce documentation on the location of established populations as well as on the functional role played within invaded food webs and, ultimately, on their ecological impact.

Next we did a series of videos, interviewing the Executive Board and leaders of the validation cases, explaining the science in accessible, everyday language.

We promoted through our usual social media channels – Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The Ailanthus documentary attracted attention because of its story-telling approach.

[u/internal-joint-initiative/](#)

Rationale for the Internal Joint Initiative

The warnings of 15,000 scientists, of the United Nations Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) and now of the UN Global Assessment Study clearly demonstrate that humanity is bringing our life support system, the biosphere, to the point of collapse. The effort to counteract this current loss of biodiversity requires concrete actions at all levels. For science, it means improving our current level of knowledge, to move beyond the present fragmentation of science, and to foster greater complementarity and synergy between disciplines, by developing new inter-disciplinary paradigms and starting to build synthetic knowledge, so as to boost innovation and involve more young scientists and civil society.

LifeWatch ERIC is Europe's first line of response to this emergency, applying and advancing ICT technologies, web networks, interconnecting scientific communities and research centres internationally into its web-based research infrastructure.

Objectives

The Internal Joint and Collaborative Initiative (IJI) was created in order to:

- i. Boost the integration of **tools and services** into the LifeWatch ERIC web portal
- ii. Focus on a major scientific issue in biodiversity and ecosystem research with relevant socio-economic implications in different fields;
- iii. Produce new and synthetic knowledge that is needed by institutions, administrations and managers to give solutions to major environmental problems at different scales;
- iv. Involve the LifeWatch ERIC National scientific communities, key international research groups and other European research Infrastructures with related interests and running activities; and,
- v. Make this effort an example of the functioning of the LifeWatch ERIC e-Infrastructure through its dissemination and outreach activities.





Ailanthus altissima: the tree from hell



Rocco Labadessa (GNR-IJA)

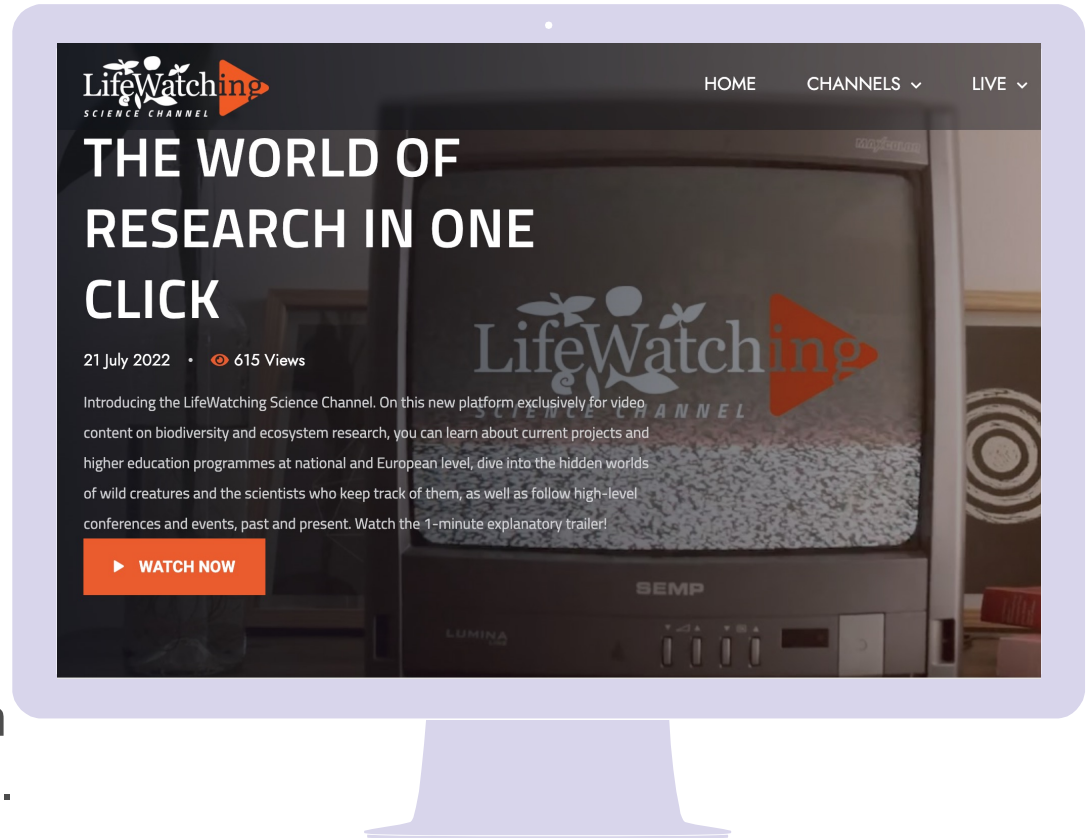
Watch on YouTube

Ailanthus altissima: The Tree from Hell

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYXKF_GAzKM

LifeWatching WebTV

- On-the-ground biodiversity documentaries
- Chats with scientists about their on-going research
- Project TV channels
- International education
- Content from the LifeWatch ERIC national TV channels.



In 2022, we moved into podcasts.

- Informal conversations with the people involved in this new paradigm of science-and-data-management
- 10-20 minute interviews every two weeks that people can listen to when they like
- Featured the 8 EU member countries of the consortium: Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.



A Window on Science

The Podcast from LifeWatch ERIC

<https://www.lifewatch.eu/cm/a-window-on-science-s3-podcast/>

Have we taken charge of the conversation?

LifeWatching WebTV – 32 subscribers, 80 videos

LinkedIn – 1,538 followers (Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium)

Twitter – 2,266 followers

Facebook – 461 followers

Podcasts – 1,000 downloads on 2 February, currently over 1,800

Are we deepening community engagement? Yes, definitely!



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Thank you! | www.lifewatch.eu/bees-2023

